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THE ECONOMY OF MEDICAL ASSOCIATION.

An Address delivered before the Vermont Medical Society, by its President, J. L. Chamberlain, M.D., of St. Albans, and communicated, by vote of the Society, to the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.

Gentlemen,—The Vermont Medical Society is entitled to my grateful acknowledgments for its forbearance and courtesy, in its re-appointment of myself, last year, as its presiding officer, notwithstanding my delinquency, and absence from its annual meeting. Suffer me to assure you, my delinquency was the result of unavoidable obstacles, and from no lack of interest in the Society. On the present occasion, allow me to dispense with further apology, and to occupy your attention at once with the business which concerns us.

Our Society has probably yet failed of answering the expectations of its founders. These expectations may have been somewhat indefinite; and just in that proportion was it probable the results would prove unsatisfactory. Our only hope, therefore, of better success, is to consider definitely, what are the ends we propose by this organization? Is our Society, in any technical sense, to be a school of medicine; a didactic institution? Are its opinions in medicine to be of binding force in the Commonwealth? If so, its jurisdiction should extend to all minor schools, and to every professorship in the State. Obviously, its founders had no such thought, and the Legislature no intention to confer such powers. I have forgotten the import of the petition for its charter, but I remember the remark of one who was interested, with others, in procuring it, "that they had organized a society, which in its results would be of little consequence to themselves; but that it rested on their successors to make it an honor to medicine, and a blessing to the State."

What, then, are the legitimate ends, the practical purposes, of this Society? My knowledge of the organization of kindred societies in other States, and of their influence on the condition and character of members, is limited; but to some extent, the same disappointment in expected results has been the lot of others. If so, may it not be possible that we have expended our labor in a wrong direction? that we have, in the phrase of modern flippancy, mistaken our mission? The ultimate end proposed to be attained by medical association, no doubt, has been, advancement in the knowledge of medicine. Such, too, was the end of our first lesson in anatomy; our attendance on medical schools; our study in retirement, and our watching of disease in the chambers of the

sick. By these methods, mainly, have attainments and discoveries in medicine been accomplished. I repeat, then, that the purpose of this Society is not to assume the province of teachers; not to usurp the office of our medical schools, nor to lord it, even, over the opinions of its own members. Its proximate end, if I may appropriate the phrase, is the cultivation of the *man*, through the medium of his social and moral faculties, and thus indirectly to enlarge the physician's capacity for knowledge, and to increase his power for usefulness to his fellow men. If we might conceive of a being purely intellectual, uninfluenced and unmodified with a touch or trace of the moral faculties; no matter how keen his perception of such truths as merely pertain to natural science; would we look for his success in the study or treatment of the diseases of man, a social and moral, no less than an intellectual and physical being? In abstract, or pure science, he might excel. But conceive, if you can, of an association of such individuals, in form of a medical society; without moral endowments, and consequently incapable of emotions or social relations. They would make little advance, I apprehend, either in the "humanities," in the parlance of the schools; or in those other humanities which comprise, not unfrequently, the very gist of disease itself.

I do not propose that the specific topics of medicine should fail of a place, in the action of this society; nor that they should fail, even, of pre-eminence; and yet I conceive that in the *economy of our association*, we should recognize our social, no less than our professional relations; our relations to community as men, no less than as physicians; as men of like passions and like infirmities, and as having personal duties and personal rights in common with others.

To the private preceptor and to the schools of medicine, is confided the duty of imparting to the pupil the facts and principles of medicine, as they are generally, and, as we believe, justly received. In the aggregate experience of professional life, every community will furnish materials, some of which are novel, all of which may be important, as illustrations of the truth or falsity of our opinions. These are the subject-matter which should occupy the attention of our Society, and should find their place on its records. In strict technical parlance, this may be said to comprise the department of *medical culture*; and in this *alone* the Society has been supposed to be interested. In this misapprehension, I conceive, lies the mischief, on which is chargeable the blight that has fallen on us, and on other kindred societies. Had medical culture, as an end, been attained, in the measure which was reasonably expected, I should have no reason for complaint, if the proposal for change in the economy of our Society should be regarded as uncalled for, and impertinent. But as our failure is a matter of notoriety, and admitted by professional men in the State, whose opinions are entitled to respect, I trust my remarks may be received with indulgence.

It is much easier, however, to condemn than to amend; to point out failures, than to provide remedies. My own theory of professional organization may be visionary and impracticable. My purpose is rather to suggest, and invite others to reflection and effort, than to offer definite remedies myself.

Many beautiful pictures have been made, and presented to the world for its admiration, or its sneer, of the disinterested benevolence, the self-consuming toil, and the love of medicine for its own sake, exhibited by those who have spent their lives without hope of reward, in the ranks of our profession. In many instances such pictures may have been from the life, and such representations simply true and just. Yet you need feel no alarm for my safety. I am far from meditating a tilt against selfishness, in a vain crusade against the world, or against my professional brethren. Physicians are like other men, good, bad or indifferent; and I will gladly compromise on the concession that they are no worse than others. In the duties of their profession, they need stimulus for exertion, no less than material for expenditure; and their usefulness as a class, depends no less on their social relations with each other, and with society, than on the amount of their scientific attainments. How these relations are to be modified and improved, though a question of great difficulty, is nevertheless worthy the attention of thoughtful men.

This is no place for discussing the question, whether the art of medicine, in its rise and gradual development, has been a positive benefit to the world. We may regard the matter as settled by common consent. And yet, one prominent impediment in our way is the scepticism which still abounds, scarcely less among cultivated than ignorant men. This numerous class are most of them no less sceptical in their opinions of medicine, than in their estimates of the rectitude of those who prescribe it. They regard the private practitioner as a foot-pad, in the act of clutching a purse; and medical societies and medical colleges as combinations for the robbery of community. As most errors in opinion have their opposites, equally erroneous, so scepticism in medicine meets with its rival error in credulity, which overmatches its antagonist, in its power for evil. The latter, especially, is the source of a great variety and amount of disturbing influences; and it would seem as if, just in proportion to the discovery of that which is demonstrably true and useful in medicine, is the increase of mischievous absurdity and folly to be encountered. Let it be satisfactorily shown that in some instances agencies have been employed, of greater power or in larger quantities than the exigencies of disease have demanded; and especially if we admit that disease may often be safely entrusted to nature alone; then, forsooth, we may look for clamorous denunciation of *allopathy*; and doses of diluted nihility are advocated with a zeal, which alas! simple truth can never command; and this, too, by those who prate loudly of *right reason* and *right logic*. The *proof* that homœopathy it infallible is obvious, and incontrovertible. "A hair of the same dog cures." The time was, since the commencement of your own professional lives, when the occasional employment of pepper and steam, in the treatment of disease, in the hands of educated and competent men, resulted in the irruption upon community of hordes of ignorant pretenders, who dealt mischief and murder without measure and without mercy. And why was this? Simply because a blockhead had seized on a fact in medicine, which he had neither knowledge to appreciate, nor skill to apply. This, too, had its ready *quod erat demonstrandum*. "Heat is life; cold

is death." Water, even, the good creature which heaven has so abundantly supplied, for the refreshment and sustenance of all forms of life; cold water, almost an ethereal beverage, a celestial lotion, must be wrested to unnatural use, and harnessed to the car of Juggernaut! It may "do the State some service" by water-logging a few scores of dupes, who might otherwise perpetrate greater absurdities. And wherefore? For the last half century, the therapeutic value of water has been rising in the estimation of medical men, both for topical and general use, in the treatment of disease. A brainless booby had fallen, no doubt, on some enthusiastic page of a Currie, or other advocate of water, as an auxiliary in the treatment of disease; and, lo! the windows of heaven must open. I know not whether hydropathists have adopted, like their worthy associates, their distinctive motto. Let me suggest one for their use. "It never rains, but it pours." How far these men are honest believers in their own pretensions, it may be difficult to determine; but I deem it within the range of charity to conclude, that with the more intelligent dispensers of these humbugs, their mission of benevolence would end with the cessation of liberal fees.

That credulity should abound, and that such impositions should be practicable in a population half-civilized, is no matter of wonder. But that New England itself should prove a fruitful field for the growth of such absurdities, with all its acknowledged intelligence, refinement and moral culture, is proof that medicine has yet failed of accomplishing its mission. Medical schools take cognizance of errors in medical hypothesis and practice. It is, perhaps, no less the province of medical societies. There is higher truth, however, involving moral elements, which must be made co-ordinate, and co-operative, before medicine can confer its highest benefits on the world. A combination of medical men for purposes of self-aggrandizement would probably defeat itself, and could never result in real advancement in professional knowledge, nor in practical utility to the community, for whose benefit, mainly, these combinations should be made.

Medical colleges confer medical degrees, as rewards for high attainments in professional science. This is appropriate. But there is a higher attainment sometimes achieved; and, that, too, by men who have failed of the honors of a college. Nor is this of necessity dependent on the highest grade of intellect, the deepest learning, or the readiest insight into the obscurities of nature; but is the result of hearty, diligent and conscientious devotion to the profession of medicine. We have each of us, possibly, an individual in mind of this description. And what are his characteristics? His entrance on professional life was unheeded. He may have come from academic halls; or may have found his way from the obscurity of private instruction. He is no genius, and consequently will never cut the gordian knot, which, nevertheless, his patient plodding may untie. He has never read a multitude of books, for he is unable to command them; but he ponders well the import of the few he values, and gives earnest heed to the lessons his own experience furnishes. In his professional companionship, he seeks rather to learn than to instruct; or if he would impart to others, he seeks to

inform, rather than to shine. In his intercourse with men, he is unobtrusive and unexacting, claiming for himself merely the privilege of quietly pursuing his lawful ends, by lawful means; and freely awarding the same to others. In consultation he claims no unwonted sagacity, but listens with patience and candor; and yields his opinions heartily, when the better reasons of another have convicted him of error; or, if still constrained to differ, it may be in terms of self-distrust, and in the spirit of unfeigned respect for the judgment of others. He will earnestly peer into that which is obscure or opake; but his honesty revolts at the pretension, that he sees through impenetrable darkness. Consequently, innumerable things in medicine are confidently claimed to be known by others, that are yet matters of doubt and inquiry to himself. In his own practice he encounters few unprecedented cases; or if he fails to recognize all he meets, he wisely concludes his own experience is too limited, or his own sagacity too dull, to identify that which others may have seen and described. Remedies of known power and established value are seldom rejected for novelties; and the higher potencies of medicine are reserved for their appropriate occasions. He never employs the guillotine for the execution of a fly. Indeed, his state-occasions are so rare; he has so seldom paraded the "pomp and circumstance" of medicine; he has glided so quietly on his way, that the knowledge of his existence is confined to the limited sphere of his own labors. He claims no pre-eminence for himself, and his own employers account for the fact, that his resources have always been adequate to their own occasions, by the conclusion that their own occasions have been small. He may be very uesful; but how should he be distinguished? He has never extirpated ovarian tumor, nor made the Cæsarean section. On most occasions, he reduces dislocations without machinery, and restores fractures without derangement of relation, or loss of utility, by simple contrivances that have been long in use. How should he be noted? He has seldom recommended the inhalation of ether; and chloroform—never. He may still prefer opium to morphine, for its appropriate occasions; especially when he knows that his opium *is* opium, and lacks the means of knowing whether his morphine is *morphine*, or a mixture of other materials, he knows not what, nor in what proportions. How can such a man be eminent? His alma mater has forgotten him; or, perchance, he is a foundling. He may have mingled in procession, or as a silent listener, with the members of a medical society; but no medical hall ever resounded with his voice. He never contributed a page to a medical journal, nor was his name ever mentioned in connection with official station or official duty in his profession. No doubt he would be unequal to the duties and exigencies of a professor's chair; and yet he makes one of a class, at whose feet the occupants of these chairs might sometimes learn invaluable lessons. There are yet men of this class, ungraced with the badge of doctor of medicine. Is it not in the province of this Society to confer a more substantial, a less equivocal honor, and to award them the title of *medical benefactors*? They are the yeomanry of the profession, on whose vigilance and industry medicine is mainly though indirectly dependent for advancement; and on whom the community are

directly dependent for the benefit which medicine can confer. It is in the countenance, cultivation, and augmentation of this class of men, I apprehend, that the Society may discharge one of its most appropriate duties.

[To be concluded next week.]

GASTRITIS.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

Mr. J. T., æt. 73, sanguino-nervous temperament, suffered an attack of bilious colic, or what is sometimes denominated cholera morbus, Sept. 20th, 1850, attended with the usual symptoms of puking and purging bilious matter, which continued some twenty-four hours, when the purging entirely ceased, but the vomiting continued, with severe gastric irritation. Everything taken was ejected, even the mucilages, until Sept. 23d, when I was called. Found the tongue red, dry and fissured; pulse somewhat increased in frequency and quantity, but not so frequent as the nature of the case would seem to indicate, being increased 10 or 15 in a minute, with pain and tenderness in the region of the stomach. Ordered bloodletting, general and local, warm bath, calomel and opium, with fomentations of hops to the epigastrium.

25th.—Irritation subsiding; vomiting not so frequent; less pain and tenderness of the epigastrium.

27th.—Half grain opium, with three grains calomel, once in six hours; enema of soap and water in three hours after each powder.

28th.—Improving to all appearance; bowels moved with sul. mag.

30th.—Convalescent; pain, tenderness and vomiting nearly removed. Ordered enemas to be continued, with mild laxatives, if necessary, to keep the bowels sufficiently open. Crust-water and gruel for nourishment.

The patient remained comfortable six or eight days, when a neighbor called, and proposed to cleanse his stomach with pills, composed of aloes, gamboge, &c., to which he consented. The treatment resulted in a return of his former symptoms, except a constipated state of the bowels. The stomach was very irritable, everything taken causing a severe burning until ejected. Ordered acetate morphia, one sixth of a grain once in four hours, with fomentations to the epigastrium, followed by blisters dressed with mer. unguent. The morphine increasing the irritation, after the first twenty-four hours was discontinued, and cyanuret of potassium substituted, one eighth of a grain once in six hours, which had a favorable operation for two days. I would remark here, that if any drug deserves praise in gastritis, I believe it to be this. As the disease progressed, it assumed more of a typhoid type; tongue darker red, dry and fissured. The next and last medicine prescribed was acet. mor. and nit. bis. in combination, which, like all other internal medication, proved ineffectual. On the fourth or fifth day of the relapse, in consultation with Dr. Clark, of Montpelier, a slight swelling was discovered in the left of the epigastrium. Diagnosis, distention of the stomach,

carrying before it a portion of the spleen. Ordered continual blister, dressed with mer. unguentum, withholding all food and medicine from the stomach, and supporting the patient with injections of beef tea, broth, &c., a course which was continued for six weeks, keeping up for the most of the time external irritation. Small quantities of starch and gum water were occasionally swallowed within the time alluded to, but not retained. About the time the swelling was observed, the pain appeared more acute and lancinating, the complexion turning sallow, strongly indicating cancerous degeneration.

At the expiration of six weeks, Mr. T. was able to take a small quantity of food, perhaps a teaspoonful of beef tea at a time. He was very much emaciated, but able to get on and off the bed at any time. He has continued to improve, and can now take his usual quantity of nourishment.

I think there are some interesting points connected with this case. 1. The slight increase of frequency of pulse, with such a high grade of gastric irritation. 2. The difficulty of distinguishing cancer from inflammation, by any train of symptoms known. 3. The length of time the patient was supported by injections, taking into consideration his age and infirmities. It has long been a question whether patients with gastritis receive benefit from internal medication, and I believe it is not yet settled; but the time will come, I think, when the negative will have the majority.

Yours respectfully,

Calais, Vt., Jan., 1851. E. S. Dening.

DR. LAMBERT'S SECOND BOOK ON ANATOMY AND PHYSIOLOGY.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

I noticed in the Journal, some months since, a work on anatomy and physiology, by Dr. T. S. Lambert, of New York. That work, as I then remarked, was particularly designed for our higher schools and colleges, and for the general reader. Dr. L. has, however, within a few weeks issued a second book on the same subjects; but with questions, and designed in all respects as a school book, for our *common schools*. The same commendatory remarks which I felt bound to make in regard to Dr. L.'s first book, apply with equal truth to his second book. Dr. L. seems to understand, at once, what is most important that children should know on these subjects; and he displays a happy tact in imparting that knowledge, which I think but few possess. This work is scientific, being written by one thoroughly versed in his subject, and is posted up to the present state of anatomical and physiological knowledge; a remark which will not apply to many of the treatises of the kind, which are now in general use. It is written in an easy, flowing style, and in such a manner as at once to arrest the attention, and instruct the pupil. It is a practical work. General principles are taught, and practical truths deduced from them, with which all should be acquainted, and which if rightly used, must conduce to the health, happiness and usefulness of men. Dr. Lambert is in many respects a self-

made man. He has, by an unceasing perseverance, overcome obstacles which at first seemed insurmountable; and has succeeded not only in obtaining a collegiate and thorough medical education, but has also made himself familiar with most of the natural sciences, and quite a number of foreign languages.

The reason why I have thus plainly spoken of Dr. L. and his work, is that I might call the attention of the profession to the honorable and uniform course which he has taken in regard to quackery. In all his lectures (and they have been delivered throughout all the eastern and middle States) he invariably warns his hearers to beware of quack medicines and quack doctors. He reasons with them on the subject, and gives illustrations gathered from his own observations which place quackery in such a light, that none could look upon it but with abhorrence and detestation. I presume that it is generally known to medical men, that most of the itinerant lecturers on these subjects pursue just an opposite course. Many of them are men of little science and less morality. They frequently favor some one of the popular humbugs of the day, or they have a theory and practice of their own, which they think should be looked upon with peculiar favor; at any rate, they do not hesitate to give a side thrust or repeat some stale joke at the expense of those to whom they are indebted for the little knowledge they possess.

I will close this communication by giving the reader a few extracts, from the work under consideration, on quackery. Speaking of the proper application of remedies, he says—"Then it is that real skill triumphs over quackery and pretence. Then it is that the honest, intelligent physician goes home thankful that he has always refused the solicitations of indolence to practise duplicity, and feels rewarded for all the toil which has made him such a benefactor to his brother man. He feels a moral pride as he passes the palace of the brazen-faced, black-hearted, ignorant quack, and scorns with utter detestation all the false and glaring pleasures that baseness pretends to enjoy—for however he seems, a man cannot be happy without he is good." Again, in speaking of poisons, he says, "Quack medicines and quackery should be rated among the poisons, for they are so in a double respect. They poison the body, and, still worse, they poison the morality of the community, by causing young men to see the apparent success of unpunished imposture. They are a pest to the land, worse than Egypt's plagues." "If they be good in themselves in some cases, it is by chance; as a man might, in the dark, reach his hand into a basket of open razors, and chance to get one by the handle. It is the scientific application of a medicine which makes it valuable." Again, "The whole community ought to rouse up in indignation against the countless impostors who laugh at the credulity and misguided confidence of men, and prey upon the love of life which is natural to every man, and the still stronger tie of affection which binds the parent to his child, and makes him hope in the groundless pretensions palmed upon him. There is nothing that a man will not do to save his life or that of one of his family. He is ready, when sick, to believe what, when well, he would laugh to scorn. His anxiety should not be allowed to be a laughing-stock and a means by which base, ingrate inhumans may fleece him."

This language may be considered strong; but is it not to the point, and true? and if so, would not a popular work on anatomy and physiology be incomplete that should not contain these sentiments? If our children should be taught the laws of health, it is certainly important that they should be made acquainted with those causes which are pregnant in producing disease. J. D. MANSFIELD.

South Reading, Jan. 22d, 1851.

PUERPERAL ANÆMIA.

[Communicated for the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal.]

MRS. E., æt. 26, had for two years previous to the period at which I was first consulted, suffered with "dyspepsia." She first came under my care in January, 1849, being then in the seventh month of her first pregnancy. She complained principally of heart-burn, flatulence, and extreme distress in the epigastric region, attended with obstinate constipation; ten, twelve or more days, sometimes, elapsing without an alvine evacuation. The general aspect at this time was not particularly morbid. The tongue was coated. Pulse slightly accelerated. The more urgent symptoms yielded to the use of aperients, with the subnitrate of bismuth and ext. hyoscyam.

She was not seen by me after the early part of February, until the day of her accouchement, which took place on the 8th of March. I then learned that about a fortnight before she had, by imprudent exposure, taken a severe cold, producing catarrhal cough, attended with a considerable degree of fever, not sufficient, however, to induce her to call any medical aid until the period of her confinement. The labor was natural, and easily terminated. The uterine hemorrhage, although free, was not remarkably copious, and the first few days after delivery were unattended with any unpleasant symptoms, with the exception of the cough and daily exacerbations of fever.

After the first week, her strength rather declined, and any attempt to assume the erect posture produced faintness. Her pulse varied from 104 to 120. The mucous expectoration attendant upon the cough was not profuse. The dyspnœa was occasionally urgent, although the patient was generally able to retain the recumbent position. Headache, with intolerance of light and sound, frequent sighing and extreme despondency, alternately with a high degree of excitement, now manifested themselves. Epistaxis had occurred once or twice in the early period of her confinement.

She was visited by Dr. Longley, of Haverhill, in consultation, on the eighth day after delivery, at which time the bronchial inflammation and febrile excitement constituted the most prominent marks of disease. Percussion and auscultation afforded no signs of organic disease, or effusion into the thoracic cavities, at this period.

During the succeeding week, the heat of the surface subsided; the tongue, which had been coated, became clean; the appetite improved; there was an abatement of the cough, and a slight increase of muscular

strength. The improvement, however, was but temporary. The prostration again became extreme; the pulse continued frequent, while it diminished in strength; the stomach became more irritable, rejecting both medicine and nutriment. The pallor of the face, which had for a few days been less remarkable, assumed more of the waxy, bloodless appearance peculiar to the disease; the lips, tongue and mucous membrane of the mouth became pale, and she finally sunk, on the 31st of March, twenty-three days after delivery.

Examination of the Body, 60 hours after death.—Abundant deposition of fat in the subcutaneous cellular tissue, and also about the heart and abdominal viscera. External muscles somewhat colored, but scarcely any blood following the scalpel. Cartilages of the ribs so much ossified as to be with difficulty divided by the knife. Some small petechial spots on the surface.

Thorax.—Lungs crepitate perfectly in every part; color of these organs externally, a very light gray. No adhesions to the costal pleura. Cavity of right thorax containing 1½ pint of straw-colored serum. Nearly 1 pint in left cavity. Solitary tuberculous deposit in right lung. Pericardium containing more than ʒ xiv. of serum. Heart large, flabby, loaded with fat; muscular texture extremely pale, soft, easily torn, and presenting the appearance of sodden or parboiled meat. A small quantity of pale, watery blood in right cavities of heart.

Abdomen.—A considerable quantity of yellowish serum in peritoneal cavity. Stomach distended, containing ʒ viij. of brownish fluid, and torn by the weight of its contents, when raised from its position. Intestines loaded with fat; not otherwise unhealthy, except exhibiting, together with the stomach, a pale, bloodless aspect. Liver nearly one half larger than the normal size, of a pale lead color, texture somewhat friable. Spleen of a natural color, soft. Kidneys pale and bloodless. Uterus somewhat larger than usual at this period after delivery, pale, flaccid, containing a small quantity of slate-colored substance of the consistence of paste, which, when removed, exhibited the internal coat of a dull white, on which the orifices of the uterine vessels could be discerned.

Head.—Not examined.

There had been but a scanty secretion of milk at any time after confinement. Abscesses had, however, formed in the mammary gland on each side, containing a considerable quantity of pus.

The actual morbid change or degeneration in the physical and chemical characters of the blood in this disease, appears to be a diminution in the proportion of red globules, without any alteration of the absolute quantity of fluid in the vessels, although the serum exists in undue proportion, and the specific gravity of the blood is diminished. The analyses of this fluid in chlorosis by Lecanu have shown it to contain, in 1000 parts, nearly 862 water, 83 albumen, and 55 red corpuscles; 115 being stated as the average proportion of the last, in the normal condition.

Anæmia, under any circumstances, presents an aspect sufficiently formidable to excite the most watchful apprehension as to the result; but it is chiefly in connection with the puerperal state that it shows itself in its most malignant form, and seems in most cases to bid defiance to all remedial plans.

Hence arises the question, which as yet has been but imperfectly discussed, What is the peculiar influence of the uterine system upon the condition of the blood, which predisposes the circulating fluid to assume the peculiar character of chlorosis or anæmia? It may be mentioned that the term "hypæmia" has been suggested by Andral, as more correctly indicating the actual pathological condition in these diseases. Should the present name be retained, "anhæmia," as proposed by Good, and by Prof. Channing in his valuable notes on this disease, may be the more correct orthography.

I have reduced to a tabular form the symptoms in twenty-one cases of this disease which have been described by different authors, including that of which the history has been given above. The results derived from this table may not be uninteresting, as showing the greater or less frequency of the more prominent characteristics of the disorder.

In the record of these 21 cases, the extreme pallor or bloodlessness of the surface was noticed in all. Emaciation, which both Good and Copland have mentioned in their definition of the disease, was only observed in 3 cases. Petechial spots were seen in 2. The loss of muscular strength was noticed as remarkable in 10 cases of the 21. In 3, syncope was induced by assuming the erect posture. Headache was a prominent symptom in 5 cases, and the intolerance of light and sound was excessive in 5. Eight patients complained of noise in the ears. Delirium is only noticed in 2 cases, and confusion of mind in 1, while the mental faculties are described as remarkably clear in others. Restlessness was present in 3 cases. The dyspnœa was urgent in 7 among the number, and probably existed to a greater or less extent in others. Cough was noticed in 3 cases. Five of the patients suffered from palpitation, while the action of the heart was noticed as greatly accelerated in 11.

The digestive organs were affected as follows:—Two patients had sore mouth. The appetite was diminished in 5, and voracious in 1. Nausea and vomiting were present in 4 cases. Diarrhœa supervened in 7, while the bowels are noticed as constipated in 2. Four among these patients complained of excessive thirst. Chills are noticed in 3 cases. Among the puerperal patients, the secretion of milk was scanty in 2, and milk abscess was formed in 3.

It will be observed that many of the descriptions are more or less imperfect, and some of the more prominent symptoms probably existed in other cases than those in which their appearance is recorded.

Pathology.—The most important and constant lesion revealed by autopsic investigation of this singular malady, consists in the change in the character of the blood which has already been described.

On collating the morbid appearances shown by post-mortem examinations in 6 cases among the 21 to which reference has been made, I find that the vessels are described as nearly empty of blood in 3 cases, while in all of the 6 the fluid was of a pale red, watery, coagulating firmly in 1 case; while in 3 others, the fibrinous deposits were whitish and soft. In 1 case, the blood was observed to be mixed with a thick, whitish, opaque fluid.

No appearance peculiarly characteristic of the disease has generally been found in the cranial cavity. Increased firmness and density of the brain was noticed in a single case.

There was effusion to a considerable extent in the cavities of the thorax, in 5 subjects; amounting to 1½ pints in each cavity in 1 instance. The lungs were permeable to air in every part, in all the cases, but slightly œdematous in 2. Emphysema was present in 1 case. The quantity of serum in the pericardium was unnaturally increased in 2 cases, in 1 to more than a pint. The heart pale and flabby in 4, in 1 the muscular substance was soft and easily torn, while in another it is described as moderately firm.

The peritoneal sac is noticed as containing a considerable quantity of serum in 2 cases, and the membrane as healthy in 3. Inspection of the intestinal canal showed it to be healthy in 3 cases. Its coats are described as pale in 2, slightly injected in another. The liver was pale in 3 cases, greatly enlarged in 1, extremely friable in 1, and healthy in 1. The spleen was large in 2 cases, and noted as healthy in another. Texture soft in 1 case. In all of the cases, the kidneys are described as pale, and in 1 as flaccid.

In every case in which the disease supervened to the puerperal state, four in number, the uterus was found to be pale, the muscular tissue soft and easily torn in 1 case; and in 2 the tongue was flaccid.

In the present state of our knowledge, we cannot trace all the circumstances under which this disease is developed, or account satisfactorily for the phenomena presented during its progress. In the well-known epidemic which occurred in the Anzain mines, it was noticed that the cases all occurred in a portion of the mines, the atmosphere of which was impregnated with sulphuretted hydrogen. The depressing influence of this gas upon the powers of the circulating system, is well understood. M. Bonnet, of Lyons, has remarked that the hydro-sulphuret of ammonia destroys the red globules, and completely deprives the blood of its property of arterialization. Dr. Freke, of Dublin, has recommended its use in cases of undue proportion of the red corpuscles, attended with increased action of the heart. The effects produced by the introduction of putrid animal matter into the circulation, upon the vitality, so to speak, of the red globules—the influence of certain malignant diseases, as cholera and the graver forms of typhus, upon the condition of the vital fluid, interesting as they are in their bearing upon the subject, I have only time to notice in passing.

Having already exceeded the limits to which I had intended to confine myself in this communication, I have but a few words to add as to treatment. The most satisfactory results which have been observed, have followed the use of iron in some of its preparations. Of these the sulphate seems to have been the most generally used. The phosphate was principally relied on in the case above reported. Sir H. Marsh, in a communication to the Dublin Journal of Medical Sciences, considers iron to be most efficient, when combined with some one of the preparations of cinchona and other vegetable tonics. In those cases in which iron cannot be borne by the stomach, other metallic tonics, as the salts of

bismuth, have been recommended in its stead. Pure and dry air, light, and a nutritious diet, are important adjuncts in the general plan of treatment.

JOHN APPLETON.

West Newbury, Mass., Jan. 28, 1851.

THE BOSTON MEDICAL AND SURGICAL JOURNAL.

BOSTON, FEBRUARY 12, 1851.

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE.

[It will be seen, by the dates below, that there is no interruption, by miscarriage or otherwise, in the series of letters from the Editor, which it was feared was the case.]

Grand Cairo.—Immediately after leaving a letter at the office of the British Consul, to go by the first India mail to England, Tuesday, Nov. 13, a new series of explorations were commenced in the great Arab City—the principal incidents of which are now to be related, day by day, as they occurred, to the hour of departure for Upper Egypt. The contract which all travellers are compelled to make with the Reis, who conveys people up the Nile, in our case proved to be insufferably vexatious, owing to the sponging disposition of the Greek who acts as Vice Consul to the genuine Vice—also a Greek, and at present from home. It is a disgrace to the Government of the United States, that such abuses should be perpetrated in the name of our country, by those whose only ambition is to fleece every American citizen who calls upon them, instead of assisting to protect their persons and property.

About noon, Nov. 13, we called at the criminal court, where cases are heard and determined in short metre. The Judge, a splendidly formed man, with a keen, intelligent eye, sat, in his stockings, cross-legged, on a fat cushion that ran the whole length of the apartment, with writing apparatus on the same soft place. He received us with much politeness, ordered us to be seated, and through the dragoman and his interpreter, we mutually complimented each other's country. He regretted no trial was then in process—two cases, the only ones for the day, having just been despatched. Our presence was probably noised about the building, and in a few minutes his Excellency, the Prefect of Police, in whose hands is lodged the municipal power, greeted us most cordially. Coffee was ordered by the court, and his great excellency, a giant of a man, counting his beads all the while, congratulated us that we were in good health, &c. We expressed our gratification with all we had seen, and the security that was felt, while journeying under the vigilant government of his highness, Abbas Pasha. Some small talk followed—we all shook hands and took respectful leave, with an invitation to us to call again. We next called at the court-room of the Cadi—in an immense building, having a large square court, filled with people of both sexes, who were doubtless in pursuit of justice. Ascending a flight of steps, we came to a large hall, open to the weather towards the west. At one end a strip, perhaps 12 feet wide, was railed off—within which was a bevy of lawyers in red caps, and other law appendages, writing and arranging their Arabic statements. Next above, was the court-room; but the Judge had just been sent for by the Pasha, to

go to the palace, and consequently we missed the etiquette there too; but as he descended the steps, we uncovered—which attracted his notice, and he stopped and addressed us. Learning our country and object in visiting the court, he politely invited us to return and take coffee, expressed his regret at being obliged to leave, and invited us to make another call to-morrow. Attended by several persons, the Cadi mounted a beautiful horse, and left the yard, gracefully bowing to the people, who respectfully returned the salutation. All the distinguished persons connected with the civil service, wear a rich diamond ornament, surmounted by a crescent, suspended from the neck. Subsequently a call was made at a Moristan, or Insane Hospital, where there were 36 patients, in separate rooms, on the ground-floor. Furiously mad as some of them appeared, the doors were rickety, imperfectly fastened, and the rooms empty of furniture. A negro, who gesticulated violently, although squatting with a blanket over his shoulders, has murdered one man, and another five, which was pretty conclusive as to the intensity of their mental aberration. Two were pointed out in the common passage way, as cured. No females were shown, nor would the janitor admit that the upper story was in use, yet we strongly suspected it was occupied by women. Every person may walk in and peer at the wretched creatures, through the grates in the door.

November 14*th.*—Had more delay and unnecessary expense at the office of the American Vice Consul, through the extortionate disposition of the young Greek, before mentioned. If our Secretary of State were obliged to transact business at some of the offices in Europe, or in Cairo, it is very certain there would be an immediate revolution in the consular establishments. At table met an Italian physician in the service of the government, with an English wife, the daughter of J. Levick, Esq., a resident of Alexandria. He has in medical charge the district of Geezeh, which includes the pyramids, and a population of 200,000—among whom are 600 persons over a hundred years of age. One has reached the patriarchal age of one hundred and sixteen! Infantile life, this gentleman says, is very precarious; an immense number die very early. On passing that crisis, longevity equals that of any other country, save Russia. He considers ophthalmia to depend on topographical causes by no means understood, as it exists on both sides the Nile, but is unknown in the deserts. My observations, thus far, have led to a different conclusion, as stated in a previous letter, where absolute filthiness is charged with two thirds of the burden, the sun and sand with the remainder.

Thursday, Nov. 14*th.*—A long, provoking termination of a contract was obtained, at last, which might have been completed in two hours, had the United States a suitable person in the Vice Consulate at Cairo. We sallied out in single file early this morning, for the boat that is to take us up to the first Cataract—if not further. Any class of spectators but the turbaned, bare-footed gentry of the capital, would have laughed at the grotesqueness of our appearance. We passed through a village of fellah houses, between the city wall and Boulac, near the palace of a daughter of Mahomet Ali, whose husband is at Constantinople in disgrace. Here were seen mud hovels ten feet square, without a window, a door scarcely four feet high, in the occupancy of females, children, sheep, goats and poultry! A little straw in one corner is the bed. A red earthen jar, about as heavy as a common Boston porter could carry empty, and an earthen pan, constitute the only furniture. This may be considered a specimen of a modern Egyptian village or town. Passed the isle of Rhoda, and its numerous

palaces, in possession, of course, of the late Pasha's family. The earthen pot machine for raising water is everywhere to be seen, and heard too, turned by oxen, and creaking as though in distress. The pyramids of Sakkara soon came in view—there being an extensive grove of date palms between the river and the site of the renowned city of Memphis. Young girls were bathing, filling their jars, and walking on the bank, further up, as the daughter of Pharaoh did on the eventful day when the infant Moses came floating by in a frail basket of bulrushes—and near the same spot, too. A large two-story white-washed building on the right, is a marine hospital, rather ruinous in its aspect. A cavalcade of white turbans, sheep, camels and asses, probably bound to a fair, were discovered near Memphis, throwing up the sand with their lively pace. Next, there was a kind of fluvalite encampment of dark, flat-roofed tents—a drove of camels, and another of buffaloes. The bed of the river widens occasionally into a kind of lake, and then closes suddenly again; then comes a low, recently-formed island. Fields of Indian corn, just in the milk, sown, not in rows, growing in the mud, were near at hand. Forty-five windmills, whirling away at a spirited rate, on the very brink of the desert, where the sand meets the rich bottom land, were a pretty sight. All the pyramids of Sakkara were in view most of the day. Strange that more is not said of them by tourists, since they are stupendous works, and by no means deserving of such neglect. Square openings into the limestone rocks, are probably the entrance into ancient tombs, seen in the distance, near the water, on the left. Interminable sand hills, as far as vision can reach—a mighty waste of sterility—are obtruding themselves on our irritable optics, but a few miles from the river, on both sides.

Friday, Nov. 15th.—Another Mahometan Sabbath. We see little but the hot, sun-reflecting sands of the desert, lying between the river and the way to Palestine, occasional fields of green millet, and grazing camels, sheep, and buffaloes, with naked boys fishing and idle fellah women. The crew have dragged the boat with a rope from morning till night, against the strong, turbid current. The river has worn in so closely on the left upon the desert, as to have denuded the rocks, here and there, at different elevations. A broad ribbon of arable land has consequently formed opposite; which shows that the Nile is perpetually oscillating from one side to the other, between the great natural barriers—the rocks hidden from century to century, and then made bare again by the alternation of drifting sands or rushing waters. A distant view was had of the last pyramid—Harem el Kedab—of whitish stone, in four terraces. Hassan, the dragoman, on whose tongue we are constantly dependent, was taken sick—but a timely prescription of Dover's powder threw off the alarming febrile symptoms, so that he superintended the dinner to-day with his accustomed activity. Arabs love medicine. No matter what it is or how badly it tastes—down it goes with a gratifying relish. There is some satisfaction in practising medicine so!

Nov. 16th.—Want of wind compelled us to pin fast to the bank all night. Wild geese, turtle doves, pigeons, and fawn-colored crows, must consider this their paradise, since they stand in no fear of being shot, knowing perhaps that the Pasha forbids the natives to possess arms. It is curious to observe how the alluvial mud, under a hot sun, cracks into hexagonal blocks, very like the basaltic columns of certain geological localities. A little volcanic heat below, with pressure above, would speedily convert it into slate-stone. All the east side of the Nile is in rough barren

ridges, having pyramidal forms—which in the distance are as imposing as the smaller artificial structures at Sakkara. All night we could hear masses of mud fall into the stream, which are at once dissolved, readily explaining the turbid state of the water, in a single pint of which there is a table-spoonful of sediment. Fishes must go by the sense of touch, for their eyes can be of no more service to them here, than in the Mammoth Cave, where nature dispenses with them altogether. Coming in sight of Benisooef, where a weekly market is held. This day's route has been less productive of incidents in sight-seeing, than any preceding one since leaving Alexandria.

Sunday, Nov. 17th.—A wretched apology for a band of music was performing in a palm-tree shade, as we neared the town of Benisooef, the largest place, say the books, in Upper Egypt. The stars and stripes of our boat evidently created a sensation, and many loungers came to smoke in front of us. At daylight I took a position on a high mound, the site of perhaps forty towns since the first settlement of this extraordinary valley —which afforded an extended view of the dreary desert to the east, with the fertile, level plain of mud in the opposite direction. The streets of the town are from three to five feet wide, often covered with reeds overhead, to exclude the sun. There are one or two buildings with latticed windows, indicating harems, and consequently the residences of official personages. Here resides a governor of a province. The troops were exercising in a distant field. After looking into cheerless houses of a single room, street after street, where the only furniture was a stone jar for water, another for cooking over a smoke of dry dung, and a rush mat for a bed, I slowly returned to the boat. Hassan, the dragoman, has had a relapse, and I gave him an emetic, which he relished mightily. Whenever another and another swallow of ipecac. was given, to increase the nausea, the poor fellow would say, "tank you"!

Penetrating Wounds by Needles.—It is well known that broken needles in fleshy parts of the body are productive of much discomfort to the patient, and often cause great perplexity to the practitioner in his efforts to remove them. The small size of the opening which is made by the needle, and the previous attempts to extract it by some friend before the physician is sent for, present obstacles sufficient to deter him from exploring the parts with any hope of success. If, under such circumstances, it is decided to remove the offending matter, it is generally done at the risk of injury to the patient; whereas, when let alone, after a gentle search, the needle will generally, in due time, point to the surface, either near where it entered, or in parts remote, and may then be easily removed. We have known instances of hands being nearly destroyed by the indomitable perseverance of the surgeon to discover what he has been told he could find in the flesh. It is decidedly impolitic and unsafe to extend our dissections to any great extent among the tendons of the hand, for the purpose of discovering and removing points of needles, especially when it is known that no real injury may be produced by leaving the offending matter to make its own exit, whenever nature is disposed to have it do so. In many cases the needle may be extracted easily; and, of course, it is then our duty at once to relieve the patient. We cannot agree with those who consider it unsurgeon-like to leave a patient *undelivered* of a needle, and therefore prosecute the search at all hazards. In this, as in

other cases, "discretion is the better part of valor." The singular fact of needles, and pieces of needles, having been known to traverse the principal parts of the body, and through organs, too, which are vital in their functions, without any material injury, is, of itself, sufficient to warrant us not to be *too officious* in attempting to remove them, especially when we do not know exactly where they are. A case of this kind presented itself to us some eight weeks since for advice. A lady broke off a common sewing needle in the fleshy part of her hand. As there had been previous attempts to remove it, our guide was lost, for it was impossible to tell which of the openings was the one where the needle entered—the patient feeling the prick of it, upon pressure of the parts, any where in the vicinity of the wounds. Without making a dissection, fully knowing the uncertainty of finding the needle if we did, much timidity being also manifested by our patient, we concluded to give her the chance of getting well without an operation. Happily, in eight weeks from the time of the accident, she discovered the point of the needle over the metacarpo-phalangeal articulation of the thumb, and immediately repaired to us to have it removed. A slight incision being made, with a pair of forceps it was drawn out. It was full half an inch in length, and altered in its appearance, having the blue color so characteristic of the common fish-kook. But what appeared the most singular to us, was the distance traversed in so short a space of time, and the remarkable situation of the substance at the time of its removal. Its position, the escape of synovia, the previous stiffness and pain of the articulation, furnished conclusive evidence that the joint was invaded. The patient is now doing well, having had no inconvenience since the removal of the needle.

Hornor on Extracting Teeth.—A little book of 76 pages, written by S. S. Hornor, Practical Dentist, of Philadelphia, on extracting teeth, has been laid on our table. In the main, it may be considered a practical guide to the medical student, who may wish to engage in that department of surgery. We must confess that our opinion differs from the author's respecting the merit of that *infernal machine*, the *key*, in *wrenching* out teeth. We had really hoped the time had arrived, when that relic of barbarous torture would have been excluded entirely from the dentist's assortment of intruments. We always have associated with that instrument, the formidable operation of *lancing gums, mouths stuffed full of dirty silk handkerchiefs, a broken-off tooth, and perhaps a splintered jaw.* The work is well written and most beautifully printed, containing some very accurate drawings in lithograph of the instruments recommended by the author. Lindsay & Blakiston, Philadelphia, publishers. Ticknor & Co., Boston.

Ether and Chloroform in Surgery, Dentistry, &c.—We have received from the publishers, Lindsay & Blakiston, Philadelphia, a little volume of 189 pages, written by J. F. B. Flagg, M.D., Surgeon Dentist, of that city, upon "Ether and Chloroform: their employment in Surgery, Dentistry, Midwifery, Therapeutics, &c." This book contains much that is new, and those who may wish to consult any work on the anæstheties, will find it practical in every particular. The facetious style in which part of it is written, will provoke a smile in those who are ever so morose. It will be a pleasure again to refer to this book, and lay before our readers some of

the incidents narrated in it, of the application of ether soon after its peculiar properties were discovered. Ticknor & Co. are the Boston publishers.

Pure Nitrate of Silver.—The competition which exists among some of the manufacturing chemists to get their products into the market at very low rates, induces them to adulterate them with substances, which, though harmless in their properties, nevertheless render medicines uncertain in action. Much of the nitrate of silver which has heretofore been sold in our city, has contained more or less nitrate of potassæ, sufficient in quantity often to be discovered by the usual tests. It is very important to have *all* the chemicals which are used in medicine, free from adulteration, for the life and well being of our patients may depend upon their purity. Within the last week we have seen some beautiful-looking pure nitrate of silver in crystals, which was manufactured by Philbrick & Trafton, Chemists, 160 Washington street. The well-known reputation of this firm for integrity, and skill in pharmaceutical preparations, is a sufficient guarantee that their medicines and chemicals may be fully relied upon.

Death of Dr. John Spence, Jr.—The following notice of the death of a highly-esteemed physician of this city, is from the Boston Transcript of Saturday last. We should be pleased to publish a further account of his life and character, from the pen of some one of his many friends.

"We regret to learn that this well-known gentleman deceased this morning, about 7 o'clock, at his residence, No. 2 Baldwin place. In the prime of life, and despite all the fortifications of medical science, he had been for some time languishing under the wasting power of that scourge of our New England climate—consumption. He was a representative elect from this city to the Legislature, but such had been the state of his health that he had not taken his seat during the session."

Ranking's Abstract of the Medical Sciences.—No. 12 of this valuable epitome of the Medical Sciences, has been received. As usual, we find much in it that is interesting, although its editor apologizes for the meagreness of the number, on account of "a period of severe domestic trial." It may be had in this city of Redding & Co., and Ticknor & Co.

Medical Practitioners in Erie County, Penn.—At a meeting of the Erie Co. (Pa.) Medical Society, January 7th, the proceedings of which are reported in Philadelphia "Medical News," the committee appointed at the July meeting, to procure a list of all the medical practitioners in Erie Co., reported that there are at present seventy-nine persons, in the bounds of the county, engaged in the practice of medicine. "Of that number, twenty are members of this Society. Six are graduates of respectable schools, who are not *members*. Ten who are neither graduates nor licentiates are considered respectable practitioners, as they practise the profession to the best of their ability, in accordance with the principles of the orthodox system, without resorting to any of the devices of quackery to obtain business. Thirteen who profess to belong to the regular system are, both by their education and practice, the veriest quacks in the country. Four who practise Homœopathy, Allopathy, or anything else by which they can obtain a share of the

'loaves and fishes.' Two 'Simon pure' Homœopathists. Four Uroscopists. Three females, who are without any education, but who pretend to practise the various departments of the profession. Five '*eclectic* or *reformed practitioners.*' Ten '*Botanic, Thomsonian, or Herb* Doctors.' Such your committee believe to be a true and correct statement of the condition of the profession in our county, and we would merely remark, in conclusion, that it is such as to call for the united efforts of all true lovers of science to elevate the character and standard of our common and beloved profession."

The Treatment of Gout and Rheumatism.—M. Levret, of Lyon, lately addressed to the Academy of Medicine, of Paris, some conclusions at which he had arrived on the nature and treatment of gout and rheumatism, both of which he considered as being specific diseases, consisting of an inflammatory and a poisonous element; that their causes act directly on the stomach and indirectly on the skin and nervous centres, while the disturbance of these organs reacts sympathetically on the assimilative functions; that its treatment consists in the use of medicines which exert a special action on the elements of the disease; and, that the preparations of colchicum are those specific remedies.—*London Medical Gazette.*

Medical Miscellany.—Professor Agassiz, the distinguished naturalist, has sailed from New Orleans in the government schooner William A. Craham, and will make an exploration of the coral reefs on the coast of Florida.—George Robinett, "known in New York" as "The Fat Man," aged 23 years, died in New York, Friday night. E. J. Latham, a *doctor*, has been arrested on the charge of the coroner's jury, who state that Robinett "came to his death by mal-practice on the part of E. J. Latham."—The Hospital at Staten Island, N. Y., has 556 inmates—mostly sick of typhus and ship fevers; four cases of smallpox.—Smallpox is again quite prevalent in this city.—Dr. J. P. White, Professor of Obstetrics, &c., in the Buffalo Medical College, has recently sailed for Europe, expecting to remain abroad a year, chiefly for purposes connected with his professorship.—The annual commencement in the Buffalo Medical College will be on the last day of the term, Wednesday, the 26th inst. The address to the graduates on commencement day will be delivered by Prof. Coventry.—The valuable Introductory Lecture of Prof. Ware, of the Massachusetts Medical College, published in this Journal, has been issued in a pamphlet form.—Dr. Samuel Jackson was chosen President of the Philadelphia County Medical Society at its recent election.

MARRIED,—At Bedford, N. H., William B. Stevens, M.D., of the Asylum for the Insane, at Concord, to Miss Eliza Ann Morrison, of B.—In Holderness, N. H., Hon. Robert Burns, M.D., of Plymouth, to Miss Almira Cox, of H.

DIED,—At Utica, N. Y., Dr. Alpheus S. Greene, aged 64 years, a native of Rhode Island.

Deaths in Boston—for the week ending Saturday noon, Feb 8th, 73.—Males, 37—females, 36. Accidental, 2—apoplexy, 2—anæmia, 2—inflammation of the bowels, 1—disease of the brain, 3—congestion of the brain, 1—consumption, 9—convulsions, 2—cancer, 1—croup, 2—dropsy, 1—dropsy of the brain, 4—typhus fever, 1—typhoid fever, 1—scarlet fever, 1—lung fever, 6—fracture, 1—hooping cough, 3—disease of the heart, 2—infantile, 4—influenza, 1—inflammation of the lungs, 2—inflammation of the liver, 1—marasmus, 3—measles, 6—old age, 2—puerperal, 1—scrofula, 1—smallpox, 4—teething, 3.

Under 5 years, 32—between 5 and 20 years, 11—between 20 and 40 years, 17—between 40 and 60 years, 6—over 60 years, 7. Americans, 42; foreigners and children of foreigners, 31.

Case of Communication between the Stomach and External Surface of the Abdomen.—In the last number of the Edinburgh Monthly Journal of Medical Science, is a paper by Dr. William Robertson, one of the editors, upon the case of a woman who has a communication between the stomach and external surface of the abdomen. The great similarity between this patient and Dr. Beaumont's, Alexis St. Martin, who was the subject of many experiments in this country, some years since, has induced the Medico-Chirurgical Society of Edinburgh to make similar observations and experiments upon her, so far as may seem compatible with her welfare. The committee to whom is entrusted the examination, consists of Drs. Christison, Bennett, Maclagan, and Robertson, with Messrs. Syme & Goodsir. We have no doubt that this committee, which consists of gentlemen eminent in medical literature and science, will make many interesting observations in the physiology of digestion, which the modern researches on that subject would seem to render very desirable. This opening into the stomach is attributed by Dr. Robertson to a chronic ulcer in its cavity, which occasioned, "whether by perforation or otherwise, extension of inflammation to a limited portion of its external surface, and consequent adhesion to the abdominal parietes—that thereafter an abscess formed external to the stomach, and discharged its contents into the viscus, —that the contents of the stomach; acting upon the walls of the abscess, ultimately caused the ulceration of the integuments."

Swallowing a Handkerchief.—In the Provincial Surgical and Medical Journal, is the report of a case of a boy, who actually *swallowed a silk handkerchief* nearly a foot square. On the third day it was dejected from the bowels, perfect in every respect, except a slight discoloration. Probably this is the first instance in which a human subject has been thoroughly *wiped out* with a silk handkerchief. It is said that the boy was subject to epileptic fits, and imbecile in his intellect; and although not cured, was not rendered any worse by this extraordinary operation.

The Prospects of Pharmacy—Return of Mr. Jacob Bell for St. Alban's. —It is with satisfaction we announce that Mr. Jacob Bell, well known as the Editor of the Pharmaceutical Journal, has been returned Member of Parliament for Saint Alban's, by a majority of 129. We think that the introduction of this gentleman into the House of Commons will be beneficial to the interests, not only of those whose rights he has specially and ably advocated—namely, Pharmaceutical practitioners, but of the medical profession in general. We may anticipate from the exertions of the honorable member some good results in reference to a Medical Reform Measure, and the proposed separation of drug-dealing from medical practice: also a Restriction of Sale Poisons Bill, an other subjects of which the very large proportion of lawyers, merchants, and magistrates, who now occupy the Benches of the House, have no practical knowledge.—*Lon. Med. Gaz.*

Medical Students in Paris and London.—*L'Union Médicale* reports that there has been a great increase this year in the number of students attending the medical schools of Paris. In 1849 there were 880 inscriptions only: in 1850 the number has risen to 1223. The registrations in London for the present session are said to amount to 1035—a number which is larger than the average.—*Ib.*